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SLCC JOURNAL

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News Bits and Commentary



by Frank Klierer

Do we have shows?

If you've been saying to yourself lately, "It's been a long time since I've been to an Atari show," fasten your seat belts and prepare to hit the road. As you can see we have 3 shows advertised in this issue of the JOURNAL due to take place in the next few weeks. Also, Atari is to announce anytime their new Ararifest schedule for this year. New hardware and software are promised at these events.

Atari sales and profit up.

Atari reported operating gains for the fourth quarter and all of 1987 as sales increased. This gain was posted even after taking a write-down related to Atari's October acquisition of the Federated Group, a troubled electronics retailer. Fourth quarter net income fell to \$18.7 million, or 32 cents a share, from \$23 million, or 43 cents a share, a year earlier. For the entire year, Atari earned \$57.4 million, or 99 cents a share, up from \$44.5 million, or 95 cents a share, in 1986. Sales in the latest quarter tripled, to \$277 million, from \$92.7 million. The 12-month sales totaled \$493.2 million, up from \$258.1 million in 1986. Atari has indicated that Federated would continue to lose money through this year's third quarter. Federated, which now accounts for 25 percent of Atari, is partly responsible for increased sales figures as are strengthened computer sales in Europe and booming video game sales in the United States. Greg Pratt, an Atari spokesman, said, "Video games were obviously a hot category in 1987, there were no teddy bears or laser guns to take those dollars away. People went back to more traditional stuff and bought video games." Approximately 300,000 STs were sold in '87, with the majority sold in Europe.

Low U.S. sales blamed on Government

When pressed on the lack of U.S. sales for the ST line, and nonexistent promotional activities, Atari begins by pointing a finger at the U.S. Government and more specifically the lack of DRAMs. DRAM chips (dynamic Random Access memories) are used to form the basic memory in your computer, and are also one of the easiest and least expensive to produce. They contain rows and rows of identical transistors. There used to be a DRAM abundance in this country, thanks

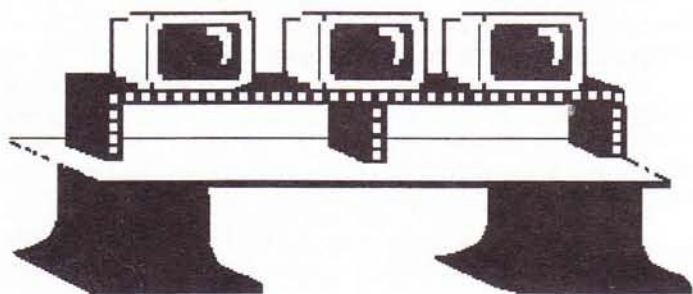
to the Japanese flooding the market here at below their cost in hopes of gaining a greater market share. In stepped the U.S. Commerce Dept. to force a trade agreement, but too late in the game to save most American DRAM suppliers, and the market was for the most part abandoned to Japan and later Korea. Now these foreign manufacturers are scaling back on the basic DRAM chip as they prepare to begin production on a new type of DRAM four times as large, and the shortage worsens.

In trying to fit these puzzle pieces together, it seems that Atari can still produce in Taiwan using what it can get from Japan and more profitably sell in Europe where the demand is high. The lack of DRAM has put Atari's plans to build a U.S. plant on hold, as well the increased promotion and distribution of STs that would follow the creation of a new manufacturing facility. If and when such a plant would be created, it would be a totally automated, surface mount factory.

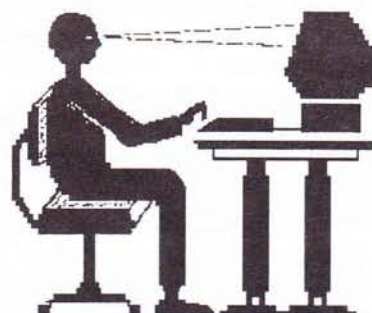
Atari sues Micron

Atari has filed a lawsuit against Boise, Idaho based Micron Technology. Micron is one of only two U.S. companies that still produce DRAM chips, Texas Instruments is the other. Atari claims that it reached an agreement over the phone to buy 3 million memory chips from Micron for \$3.75 apiece. However, Micron later broke the agreement by asking for a new, substantially higher price. No comment from Micron on this. The following information on this subject was gathered from the Random Access BBS in New York City:

"On the spot market, prices for 256K dynamic RAM's, the chip Atari was trying to buy, have doubled in the last few months, to between \$4 and \$7. Some computer makers are passing on the cost increases to customers. Others, unable to obtain chips are slowing their production and delaying introduction of new products. Atari said Micron had urged the United States government to impose sanction on Japan to get Japanese chip manufactures to raise prices and cut production, then "exploited" the resulting shortage and price increases... Richard Berhardt, a spokesman for Atari, said the extent of the damage would depend on how quickly the company could obtain the chips it thought it would buy from Micron-and on the cost of



CRT TIPS



The following are some selected excerpts from a talk given by Julia Lacey of CRT Services, Inc., Winston Salem, NC. The original article was in the Sept. 1986 Piedmont Triad Atari Users Group Newsletter.

Here are some hints to make you more comfortable while using your computer;

1. Place your monitor at **EYE LEVEL**. This will stop the pulling of muscles in your neck. Your head weighs 10-15 pounds. The more forward your head is pitched, the more the muscles are used at the back of your neck to hold up your head. Ms. Lacey sometimes brings a bowling ball to her talks to demonstrate the weight of the head!

2. Place any printed material you may be working with at the same distance from your eyes as the monitor, whenever possible, to avoid constant changes in focus. She recommends a working distance of **25 inches** or more from your monitor, depending on the size and what feels comfortable.

3. Sit **UPRIGHT!** This will keep back muscles rested. Poor posture causes the internal organs to move into places where they cannot function well. A good posture chair is well worth the money because you only get one skeleton. If you use a conventional chair, the seat should be low enough so that there is no pressure on the bottom of your thighs above the knees, from the weight of your legs. There should be room for three fingers between the back of your knee and the front edge of the chair. Adjust the height of your chair or keyboard so that your elbows are at your sides—not extended out in front of you.

4. Place the monitor so that the line of sight is **PARALLEL** to the window, if possible, i.e. window to the side of you. The worst possible position is to sit facing the window, which causes your eyes to continually compensate for the difference between the brightness of the window and the monitor. The second worst arrangement is to have the window behind you, reflecting in the monitor screen. This goes for the bright lamps as well.

Fluorescent lights are **AWFUL**, in Ms. Lacey's opinion. She is concerned with the 60 hz flicker inherent in these lights, which, when combined with the cyclic flicker of a monitor, can and does cause distress among CRT users. She recommends no overhead fluorescent lighting.

5. Turn the brightness of the monitor **DOWN** as far as possible, so that the light feels "soft" on your eyes, but not so far down that you are straining to read for lack of light. This will also prolong the life of your monitor screen.

Incidentally, Ms. Lacey does not like color monitors. In her experience, which includes talking to thousands of people who use monitors 6 to 8 hours a day, she says that inevitably those using color monitors report the most eyestrain, headaches, changes of prescriptions for eyeglasses, and the like. The reason, she thinks, is that the pixels are composed of an array of different color phosphor dots, which limits resolution and confuses the eye. With regard to monochrome monitors, she told the group that research shows black and white to be the easiest on the eyes. Otherwise, green and amber are about equally popular but to her knowledge, neither has been scientifically proved to be superior to the other.

Ms. Lacey is engaged in something of a crusade to improve conditions for those using computer work stations. She is trying to get appropriate federal agencies to set standards for work place conditions to insure safe use of CRTs, and she will be testifying before Congress on the subject. She is very interested in providing further information to any group with an interest in the subject and urges you to call or write to CRT services. She has written a 50+ page pamphlet which is available by writing:

CRT Services, Inc.
Julia Lacey, V.P.
5021 Mereworth Court
Winston-Salem, NC 27104
(919) 765-0144

END

Recently, Frank built a large computer desk for us. He used a 36" hollow core door and 1 x 12" pine for a double shelf on top. The door makes it possible to get the monitor back far enough from your eyes (see article above). The base-legs are two enclosed bookshelves which have the powerstrip and other miscellaneous items. It is convenient to reach down and turn on the powerstrip. He also made a movable shelf that holds the disk drive, books, and disks while covering the cables that come out of the computer. The shelf is about 4 inches high and can be moved under the monitor shelf.

the chips. Three million chips is a significant order, enough for more than 180,000 computers each having 512,000 characters of memory."

More chip DRAMa...

To further thicken this plot, Intel, the large Santa Clara semiconductor manufacturer, announced an agreement to team up with Micron to sell chips a few days after Atari announced its Micron lawsuit. Under this agreement, Intel will buy Micron's DRAMs, using some for its own products and sell the rest to its customers. Intel will also be able to buy up to a three percent stake in Micron. Supposedly, this agreement would ease a shortage in the chips. A spokesperson for Micro said the pact would help the situation by allowing Micron to continue to operate in the often volatile DRAM market by assuring it of a steady customer and by giving it the capital it needs for expansion. Others in electronics hope that cooperation, such as this, by American firms will lead to increased U.S. production of DRAMs.

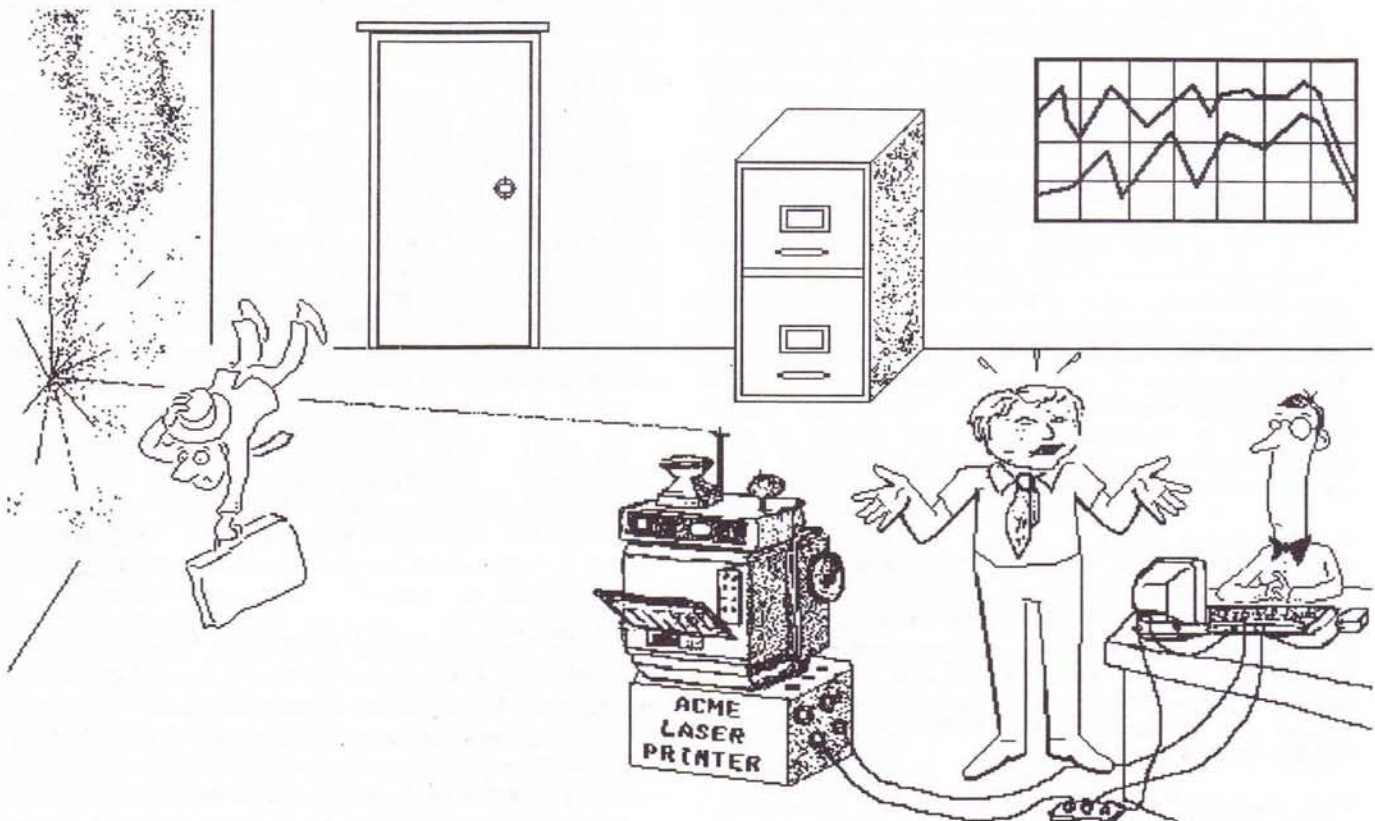
FCC plan disconnected

The following is a summary of an article from page 6 of the *Wall Street Journal* for March 17 1988. The

FCC has quietly decided to scrap its plan to sharply increase telephone rates for computer users. The FCC said it wouldn't go ahead with its plan to charge as much as \$5.50 per hour per user to hook up to computer communication networks. An FCC official described the decision as a tactical move to placate opposition from Congress and computer users. "They got the message loud and clear from Congress that this plan was a political and policy loser", said a House staffer who was informed of the FCC decision. The FCC was flooded with over 10,000 letters from computer users, the most ever over a telephone issue.

March 10 Rep. Edward Markey (D., Mass.), chairman of the House telecommunications sub-committee, said he would introduce legislation to kill the access charge - even though agency officials said they had assured the congressman's staff that the FCC itself would kill the plan. Rep. Markey said, "We'll closely monitor the commission's future actions to insure that this onerous charge doesn't re-emerge in a new form." We all need to be on the lookout because the FCC has not given up on this issue. After all, their business is to regulate our communication.

END



"We either have to read the manual, or increase our insurance."

Part II of a Three Part Article
 By Steve Everman
 (Contributing programmer for
 Antic Magazine)

Medium Resolution Bit Mapping

Now that the drudgery is over let's try taking control, and telling the electron gun, what to do for a while. Type the following in, in **Medium** resolution, using ATARI BASIC.



```

100 '--- BUTTERFLY TO SCREEN MEMORY -----
110 FULLW 2: CLEARW 2
120 SCREEN.MEMORY=PEEK(1102)*65536+ABS(PEEK(1104))
130 SCREEN.POS=SCREEN.MEMORY+27436
140 FOR X=0 TO 42: LINES.UP=LINES.UP+320
150 RESTORE CLOSED.WING: GOSUB DISPLAY
160 FOR D=0 TO 15: NEXT: LINES.UP=LINES.UP+320
170 RESTORE SPREAD.WING: GOSUB DISPLAY
180 FOR D=0 TO 90: NEXT
190 NEXT: END
200 DISPLAY: ' *****
210 FOR Y=0 TO 9
220 READ COLOR.PLANE1,COLOR.PLANE2
230 POKE SCREEN.POS+Y*160-LINES.UP,COLOR.PLANE1
240 POKE SCREEN.POS+2+Y*160-LINES.UP,COLOR.PLANE2
250 NEXT: RETURN
260 SPREAD.WING:
270 DATA 576,576,22938,8580,43989,21930,54699,11220
280 DATA 15804, 960, 25542, 7608, 25542, 7608, 7608, 384, 0, 0, 0, 0
290 CLOSED.WING:
300 DATA 576, 576, 7608, 384, 15324, 1440, 16380, 2448
310 DATA 8184, 960, 8184, 384, 7128, 2016, 4080, 384, 0, 0, 0, 0
  
```

If all went well, you should see my artistic rendering of a butterfly flitting it's way to the top of your screen. And if all didn't go well, and the system bombed, look very closely at the formulas at lines 200 and 210. If you got an out of data error, then make sure line 260 doesn't end in a comma, and that no periods are replacing commas in your data.

The first obscure line of the program comes right at the beginning at line 120. It gets the beginning address of SCREEN MEMORY. You see, address 1102 is a POINTER that points to SCREEN MEMORY. The reason the operating system uses a pointer is because it allows you and the operating system to find SCREEN MEMORY no matter where it is. A typical example would be a slide show, where two different addresses are alternately poked into the pointer at 1102. While you were looking at one picture another is being loaded into another address, and then that address is poked into 1102, and you then see the picture that has just finished loading. The strange math is because ATARI BASIC always peeks and pokes in 16 bit (ONE WORD) increments, but the pointer is 32 bits or two words long. The logic behind the math is a bit beyond this article so we won't get into it at this point.

(continued on next page)

Stop a second, and hold up your right hand. Ok, now how many fingers would it take to keep track of four colors? The answer is two.

Now Make a fist, and let's call that color number- zero or white. Then slowly, and where no one can see you, lift your middle finger high up into the air. Ok, that is color one, or green. Now lower your middle finger, and lift your index finger. That is color two, or red. Finally bring your middle finger back up to join your index finger and call that color three, or black. You see we have represented four colors with two fingers.

Hopefully that seemed vaguely familiar because we were counting from 0 to 3 in binary. If we add another finger the largest color number we would be able to show would be eight. And with four fingers we could represent 16 colors, or low resolution. We'll be calling these fingers COLOR PLANES in a moment but let's go on for now.

Our Humble demo is in Medium resolution so let's talk about that next. We mentioned before that when you got color you gave up resolution. We now use two words (32 bits) to represent 16 pixels. You see, we need to have some way of knowing what color to make each pixel. And as we just demonstrated with our fist-finger exercise, we need two bits to represent four colors. So we use two bits for each pixel on the screen. But if that was all we did we would run out of bit's before we filled the screen, and the bottom half of the screen would be garbage beyond screen memory. So we make each pixel twice as tall. We have given up resolution for color, and stayed within our limit of 32K. In other words, the operating system is using the same amount of information differently, and making the adjustment in height.

I wish I didn't have to tell you this next thing, but, the first two bits of screen memory don't represent the first pixel of medium resolution. The first, and 17th do. Wait, don't chew up the JOURNAL, it's not as bad as it sounds. The machine is just drawing the screen 16 pixels at a time. It gets all of the information it needs at one time, by putting the first two (16 bit) WORDS together. And then it draws the 16 screen pixels.

It would be much too slow and cumbersome to just get two bits at a time, when the screen was being drawn, so all 32 bits of information to draw 16 pixels are fetched at once. What that means in medium resolution is that both 16 bit COLOR PLANES are put together to make up the information for the first 16 screen pixels.

```
1ST 16 BIT WORD  0 0 0 0  0 0 0 0  0 0 0 1  1 0 0 1
2ND 16 BIT WORD  0 0 0 0  0 0 0 0  0 0 1 1  0 0 1 0
-----
COLOR           WWWWW  WWWWW  WWGB  RWGR
REPRESENTED
```

W=WHITE B=BLACK G=GREEN R=RED

Hopefully, the chart above will make this a little clearer. The very first zero on the top left of the diagram is the first bit in screen memory, or the first bit of color plane one. The 0 directly below it is the 17th bit of screen memory, or the first bit of color plane two. It

is these two bits that control the color of the very first screen pixel. Now look below the line under the two bits and you'll see a "W" for white. That is the screen color that the binary number 00 represents. If you travel along the chart you'll notice that the first ten pixels are all white. Thus nothing but background would be drawn there. The 11th pixel is different though, and will be drawn in green because the 11th bit of the two color planes makes the binary number 01, which represents green.

Can you guess what comes after color plane two, in medium resolution, screen memory? Color plane one again, of course. Then color plane two. And on, and on until the end of screen memory. But, as you well know screen memory, just like all computer memory, is CONTINUOUS, meaning it is one right after the other. There are no indications in screen memory where one SCAN LINE ends and the next begins. That little trick is up to you if you're going to be BIT MAPPING the screen. So let's see how we do it.

Medium Resolution Demo Tear Apart

Excluding the DISPLAY routine, lines 120 and 130 most of the program should be pretty simple. We have already looked at line 120, So let's look at 130, before we go onto the DISPLAY routine.

```
SCREEN.POS=SCREEN.MEMORY+27436
```

"SCREEN.POS", is our variable for the position on the screen that we are going to start drawing our butterfly down from. "SCREEN.MEMORY" is the address of the first word of screen memory, and the number 27436, is an offset, that takes us down near the bottom of screen memory, and the video screen. Thus the formula:

```
"SCREEN.POS=SCREEN.MEMORY+27436"
```

gives us an address in screen memory that is lower than the top of the screen, so our butterfly can start at the bottom of the screen. The choice of an offset number is arbitrary, as long as it is divisible by 4 ($27436/4=6859$), and it doesn't take you off the top of the screen. Drawing your object above screen memory can be disastrous. Now try changing 27436 to 27438, at line 130, and rerunning the program.

Looks like a race doesn't it? The skin vs. the bones. What has happened is we're out of alignment by one word. (Remember two bytes equal one word, so a change of two in our offset number moved us out of alignment one word.) We are now poking into two different sets of color planes. Let's call the color planes we wanted to poke into "OUR" color planes, and the two words that follows us "THEIR" color planes. What we are doing by poking the data into 27438, is putting OUR first color plane where OUR second color plane belongs, and OUR second color plane where THEIR first color plane belongs. But the electron gun doesn't care. It takes the zero's from OUR first unused color plane and puts them with the value of our second color plane just like it should. Except there's nothing in plane one but zero's so we get a strange object where our butterfly should be. Then to make things worse the

but now contains OUR color plane 2, and puts it together with the plane that follows, giving us a second unwanted object. Try changing 27436 to 27437, and see if you can understand why offsetting the memory by one byte has the result it does.

At line 210 we set the loop to function ten times, because we have chosen to make our butterfly 10 scan lines high. Actually you only see 8 scan lines but two blank lines are drawn below the butterfly so that the bottom of the old butterfly is covered over as we move up the screen. Line 215 reads the two color planes, from the restored data. Then at lines 220, and 230 we poke it into screen memory.

```
POKE SCREEN.POS + Y * 160 - LINES.UP, COLOR.PLANE1
POKE SCREEN.POS + Y * 160 - LINES.UP, COLOR.PLANE2
```

Let change lines 220,230 so we can look at them. Don't run it like this, it's just for explanation.

```
220 POKE SCREEN.POS,COLOR.PLANE1
230 POKE SCREEN.POS+2,COLOR.PLANE2
```

Hopefully it's easier to see what we are doing here. We poke SCREEN.POS with the COLOR.PLANE1 value, and SCREEN.POS +2 with the value of COLOR.PLANE2. The reason that we are offsetting by two is because COLOR PLANES are 16 bits or two BYTES apart. Just remember that although our machine normally works in 16 bit WORDS, it's memory is still in 8 bit BYTES. So we almost always peek, and poke into even numbered memory locations.

```
220 POKE SCREEN.POS+Y*160,COLOR.PLANE1
230 POKE SCREEN.POS+2+Y*160,COLOR.PLANE2
```

I've added a little more of the code back in now, so we can talk about it. "Y" is the loop counter that is controlling the FOR NEXT loop that we are in at the moment. And 160 is the number of BYTES across a scan line. So, 160 bytes will always take us to exactly one scan line below where the last one was drawn. Multiplying 160 times "Y" is just a simple way of automating this downward movement, before we draw. When We mentioned earlier about controlling how the scan lines broke in memory this is what we were talking about.

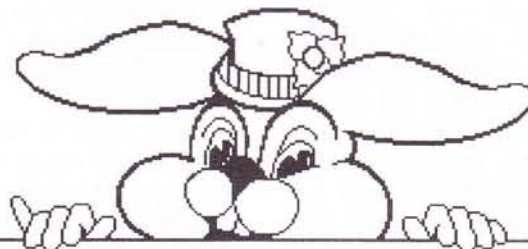
```
220 POKE SCREEN.POS + Y*160-LINES.UP, COLOR.PLANE1
230 POKE SCREEN.POS + 2 + Y*160-LINES.UP, COLOR.PLANE2
```

Finally, we add the last portion of the code, and bring it back to the original. "LINES.UP" controls the upward movement of the butterfly. LINES.UP is increment by 320, or two scan lines, between each drawing of the butterfly. That way the position we begin drawing the butterfly at is two scan lines taller each time.

(End of Part 2)

Next month, Part 3 looks at Low Resolution Bit Mapping

END



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SuperDos - Making Life a Little Easier on Your 8-Bit *a review by Bob Woolley*

I have lots of different programs, utilities, word processors, graphics, spreadsheets - you name it. I also have a lot of different, improved DOS programs. Unfortunately, many of my programs don't work with the DOS program I happen to be using at the time. Some of them are even dangerous if used with the wrong DOS. Consequently, I use DOS 2.0 for most of the things that I do. It isn't all that fancy, but it works with anything and there are no surprises. I also have a bunch of hardware add-ons that are very nice. These almost all require a different DOS to be used as they were intended. For example, I have a 256K RAMBO in my 800XL. With DOS 2.5 or SpartaDOS, I can set up a ramdisk and use it to load and save data almost instantly. No waiting around for the beep-beep-beep to end. Great stuff! Except.... Most of my stuff is going to use D1: as the source and destination of my data. DOS 2.5 uses D8: as the ramdisk - how can I take advantage of my extra memory when I am using AtariWriter, for example? Well, as some of you may know, putting a Dx: in the load or save filename will work from AtariWriter, but I'm sure that you also have discovered that you can't get a directory of anything but D1:. This isn't fatal, of course, but it is sometimes very inconvenient. That is what SuperDos is all about - convenience. In Spades.

This new DOS, being distributed by Technical Support, 205 Peoria st., Daly City, Ca., 94014, was written by an Australian named Paul Nicholls. He seems to have spent a great deal of time to make this DOS as time efficient as possible, while not creating an unfamiliar environment for the current DOS 2.0 user or his programs. For example, a directory of any drive can be requested with just one keystroke. Pressing the "2" key (no return required) will list up to 40 files from D2: on the screen in a double column format. I am not sure what happens if your disk has more than 40 files since I didn't have any handy, but I imagine that it's well handled. Compare that to the dinky "window" that DOS 2.0 gives you! There are dozens of little enhancements to the standard 2.0 menu - user controls prompting on wild-card Copy, enable Basic when returning to the cartridge (how many times have you booted into DOS without Basic and then wished you had booted with it?), a full sector copy on the DUP DISK function (copies boot disks), and BINARY SAVE addresses can be entered in DECIMAL or HEX. All these features come in a package that uses no more RAM than DOS 2.0 and even keeps some of the DOS entry points (for those programs that jump directly into DOS, which is a no-no). It even looks like 2.0; makes it easy to get started learning the new stuff!

SuperDos does not support such things as Hard Disks or time stamping, but it does support the RAMBO and AXLON memory upgrades and the ICD 1050 DOUBLER exceptionally well. This means that Double Density and

UltraSpeed SIO on the ICD Doubler both are available. This allows you to load at high speed just like SpartaDos (but, you still need SD to format the disk) and keep your DOS 2.0 file format. You can also have the DUP.SYS file load under the OS ram on an XL machine so the menu will appear instantly, change the number of drives and buffers, restore deleted files, and a ton of other things that DOS 2.0 could not do.

Of course, for me, the real standout for this SuperDos is the ramdisk handler. Going back to my earlier AtariWriter problem, SuperDos can format your extra ram as a ramdisk when it boots up, as can DOS 2.5, but it also defaults to ramdisk if D1: is not available. This means you can pop out the diskette in D1:, power down the drive, and use the ramdisk as D1:! You get a directory when you Index and you can save and load at blazing speed. Many of the programs that I have will not look for their files on anything but D1:, which makes this DOS very handy. As if that weren't enough, when the ramdisk is initialized any file with an extender of .RAM on the boot disk is copied to the ramdisk. Speaking of initializing the ramdisk, my systems have a coldstart switch (FREEZER, April 87' Journal) installed on them that allows me to re-boot the computer without turning off the power, thus saving the contents of ramdisk. This is only going to be of any value if your DOS does not zero everything out when you boot and, of course, SuperDos allows that option. In fact, this program has just about anything you would ever need for serious computing on your Atari.

That is not to say that there aren't a few bugs. Not that a bug or two is so bad, since the author seems to be doing regular upgrades on the product (mine is version 4.4). This is a good sign for those of you that might be adding some of the new hardware that is available for your systems. Like the XF551. Or XEP80. Neither of which work properly with SuperDos. Actually, the XF551 works fairly well as a single-sided, 180K drive. It does have a problem switching formats from single or extended (1050) density to double density, but if you stay in one density, it works OK. I am sure the density switching bug can be fixed, but making the DOS run a DD/DS, 360K drive may be tough. The XEP80, on the other hand, will not run at all from the DOS menu. This looks like a little no-no in the screen writing department and should be fixable (easy for me to say, isn't it?).

All in all, this software looks like a winner. I must confess that SpartaDos has too many surprises in it for me and I just do without the ramdisk and UltraSpeed SIO for most things. Not that I could do without SD, it's just that I can't use it for much. SuperDos may just fill that gap. Check it out, but remember, it isn't PD, give the author a break - look at what he gave us.

I can quit anytime.... by JON TRZCINSKI

My friend Robert is a nice guy, a decent guy. He used to stop by the office from time to time to tell me about the new Compact Discs he had bought. Not long ago, he said his wife, Laurie, was giving him a hard time, complaining that they needed to spend money on something other than CDs. I told Robert that I sometimes heard the same sort of noise, and we laughed.

The next day, he told me he'd discovered he owned so many CDs that Laurie couldn't tell what was new unless she saw him bring it in. So he brought things in when she wasn't home. And hid them in his closet. No problem.

A few days later, Robert told me he'd bought that portable CD player he'd been thinking about. He said it sounded great. He also said the best thing about it was that Laurie hadn't said anything. After Robert and I talked a bit more, He admitted she hadn't found it yet.

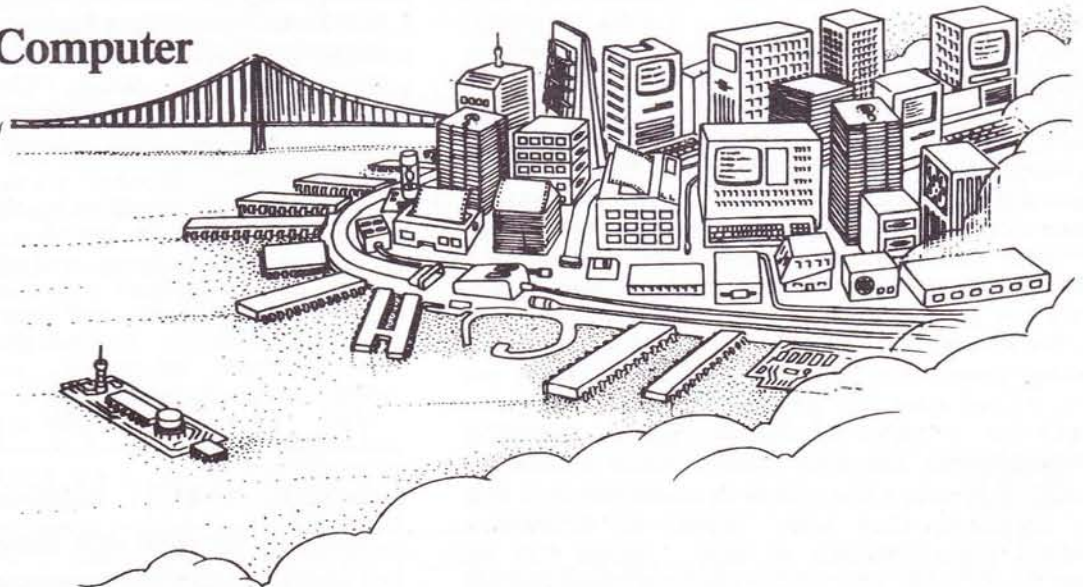
He stopped by again to ask me how I liked the Joan Armatrading CD he'd seen on my desk. I told him it's great and then asked him if he'd seen the CD players that hold six discs at once and can be programmed to play any of them. Sure, he said, asking me if I knew the best thing about them. Probably the 420 minutes of music you can play at one time, I replied. That was good, he admitted, but not as good as the fact that the model he wanted to buy looked just like his old CD player. Laurie would never know the difference. And it would be a piece of cake to get it home while she was working. No problem.

Robert came by to see me the other day. He was looking for an apartment. Laurie told him to take his CDs, records, equipment, and all those magazines and hit the road. Well, Robert allowed, sometimes love is tough - and she didn't know much about music anyway. By the way, he asked, would I like to buy some of his CDs for seven bucks apiece to help him raise a security deposit?

I got some great buys that day. Poor guy. But it made me wonder how many Roberts there are in the world, hiding CDs in the closet, juggling bills because a new batch of the Beatles is out, or - worst of all - choosing their new gear based not on how it sounds but on how much it looks like their old gear and how long the Lauries of the world will take to notice the extra lights. I've been buying stuff since I was eight. I've got music I've never listened to - or heard once, maybe. More lights, more power, more wires out the back. It's fun, great fun. I know I'm addicted.

Reprinted from April 88 High Fidelity magazine. Just change the CD stuff to computer terms - sound familiar?

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COMPUTER FAIRE**

APRIL 7-10, 1988, MOSCONE CENTER, SAN FRANCISCO, CA

FTL Revisited...



By Frank Klierer

In the last two issues of the JOURNAL I reviewed two of what I thought to be the best games released for the ST, Dungeon Master and OIDS, both created by the geniuses at FTL. It seems that this opinion is shared by others, as exhibited in a recent GENie conference with FTL Games. The following is a summary of the more important points brought out in that conference.

STX-PRESS indicated that their latest edition has a special Dungeon Master feature including interviews, and a "huge music and graphic slide show on disk with maps, hints etc."

FTL then described the DM development process: "We developed Dungeon Master and OIDS in Megamax C. However, much of the graphic code is done in assembly. Megamax C is nice because the PC relative code is small and the in-line assembly makes inserting special code easy. However, we have also developed an extensive game development system which lets us build new games without programming, but we're keeping details of this secret..." Then after more probing on what could be expected next, FTL revealed more of their genius, "The idea behind DM was to create a way of building games that lets us recover the work we've already done when creating new games. When we created SunDog, for example, all we had left afterward was a lot of specific code for this one game. In DM we created a system for making games and then created DM. Thus we have a head start for any new games. They can be any type of game we choose. We are planning many different scenarios from Science Fiction to Horror..." Toward the end of the conference it was also suggested they were "trying to develop a standard type interface so new games will be easier to get into...sort of the same rationale behind the Desktop design." They went on to add that a French and German version of DM had just been completed. FTL will also release soon, "a mini-sequel soon which is a complete new mini DM adventure that you can load as a saved game but acts like a new game. (a hidden feature of DM)" A hint book of about 60 pages of in-depth DM strategy and hints by Tracy Hickman was also announced. Tracy was a DM Beta tester and is known to some as being responsible for Dragonlance and a new trilogy from Bantam

books called the Dark Sword. There was some discussion of DM bugs. FTL indicated that they only exist, "in the last phases of the game and if you get the update from us before you encounter Lord Chaos, you can continue from your saved game with no problems...Version 1.1 is a free update if you return your disk and include return postage. Call (619) 453-5711 for details." Or if you're like one of the conference participants, and can't bear the thought of being without your DM disk, then just send \$10 for a backup and you'll get the new version. As to how to tell what version you have, "When you save or restore your game the program displays a menu box. The upper right corner shows the version number (no number means the first release version)." FTL indicated that they are fast on sending out backups, a fact I can personally attest to. The above phone number is available for phone hints, if you can't wait for the book. When FTL was asked if they had any plans for 3D, real time that will allow two players to compete via a modem, their silence was very suggestive.

Hopefully FTL will raise the consciousness of some of the quick buck software producers that are fast to find excuses for their shoddy products.

END

Super Event May 21 and 22

(Saturday and Sunday)

at the Oakland Coliseum

Golden Gate Computer Show

Special Atari Section

8 and 16 Bit

Plan ahead...We'll be there looking for you!

Real Programmers Don't Eat Quiche

Real Programmers don't eat quiche. They like Twinkies, Coke and palate - scorching Szechwan food.

Real Programmers don't write application programs. They program right down to base metal. Application programming is for dullards who can't do systems programming.

Real Programmers don't write specs. Users should be grateful for whatever they get; they are lucky to get programs at all.

Real Programmers don't comment their code. If it was hard to write, it should be even harder to understand and modify.

Real Programmers don't document. Documentation is for simpletons who can't read listings or the object code from the dump.

Real Programmers don't draw flowcharts. Flowcharts are, after all, the illiterate's form of documentation. Cavemen drew flowcharts; look how much good it did them.

Real Programmers don't read manuals. Reliance on a reference is the hallmark of the novice and the coward.

Real Programmers don't write in RPG. RPG is for the gum-chewing dimwits who maintain ancient payroll programs.

Real Programmers don't write in COBOL. COBOL is for Common Business Oriented Laymen who can run neither a business nor a program.

Real Programmers don't write in FORTRAN. FORTRAN is for wimp engineers who wear white socks. They get excited over finite state analysis and nuclear reactor simulation.

Real Programmers don't write in PL/I. PL/I is for insecure anal retentives who can't choose between COBOL and FORTRAN.

Real Programmers don't write in BASIC. Actually, no programmers write in BASIC after reaching puberty.

Real Programmers don't write in LISP. Only sissy programs contain more parentheses than actual code.

Real Programmers don't write in PASCAL, ADA, BLISS, or any of those other esoteric computer science languages. Strong typing is a crutch for weak memories.

Real Programmers' programs never work right the first time. But if you throw them on the machine, they can be patched into working order in "only a few" 30 hour de-bugging sessions.

Real Programmers don't work nine to five. If any Real Programmers are around at nine a.m., it's because they were up all night long.

Real Programmers don't play tennis, or any other sport which requires a change of clothes. Mountain Climbing is OK, and Real Programmers wear climbing boots to work in case a mountain should suddenly spring up in the middle of the machine room.

Real Programmers disdain structured programming. Structured programming is for compulsive neurotics who were prematurely toilet trained. They wear neckties and carefully line up sharp pencils on an otherwise clear desk.

Real Programmers don't like the team programming concept. Unless, of course, they are the Chief Programmer.

Real Programmers never "write" memos on paper. They "send" memos via MAIL.

Real Programmers have no use for managers. Managers are a necessary evil. They exist only to deal with bozos from Personnel, bean counters, senior planners, and other mental midgets.

Real Programmers scorn floating-point arithmetic. The decimal point was invented for pansy bedwetters who are unable to think big.

Real Programmers don't believe in schedules. Planners make up schedules. Managers firm up schedules. Frightened coders strive to meet schedules. Real Programmers ignore schedules.

Real Programmers don't bring brown-bag lunches. If the vending machine sells it, they eat it. If the vending machine doesn't sell it, they don't eat it. Vending machines don't sell quiche.

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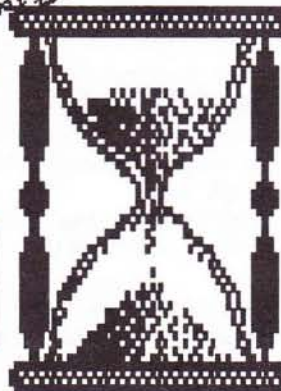
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Minutes

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GENERAL MEETING - MARCH 1, 1988

The meeting was called to order at 8:20PM by Vice-President Mike Sawley. Roll call of Officers, Present: Sawley & Moran. Excused: Barton (sick) & Hansen (moving).

Upcoming computer shows were discussed and club participation explained. The first show is March 12 & 13 at the Oakland Coliseum. The second show is the 13th annual West Coast Computer Faire at Moscone Center in San Francisco. This show starts on Thursday April 7th and runs through Sunday April 10th. The third show is to be hosted by Computer Spectrum and will be held at the Fashion Island Mall in San Mateo, this show to be held on April 30th and May 1st. Volunteers wishing to work any of these shows should contact President Barton at 352-8118.

The following motion was made and passed. MOTION: By Moran seconded by many. That the club allot sufficient funds to cover expenses at the West Coast Computer Faire. Expenses at WCCF are expected to run about \$1000. As of now we have no word from Atari as to their participation in this show. It is expected that they will again supply equipment and cover a portion of the costs.

Due to a lack of communications there was no 8 bit floppy of the month. There will be a makeup disk and the normal floppy for next month. 8 bit disk librarian Richard Stiehl advised that he had a first class music editor disk from Steve Hales. Synapse used it in their game development.

Bob Rasmussen (Computer Magic) donated two programs for this evening's raffle. AUTODUEL for the 8 bits and ST KEY for the 16 bit machines.

Program Chairman Dick Scott talked about his efforts to get speakers for the meetings. Dick also asked everybody present for suggestions on meeting contents. Some of the suggestions were: reports from the Special Interest Groups, program Demonstrations and more Question and Answer periods.

Terry Abbott, our Music SIG leader talked about what

was going on at the SIG and advised us that they were working on a theme song for the club.

The club's two BBS sysops, Mike Sawley (Key System) and DeWayne Stewart (Stu's Place) talked about some of the things going on with the BBS's and explained a bit about how passwords were set up and deleted on the two systems.

John Russell reported on a bug in the Dungeon Master game and the availability of a new version that fixes it. John also demonstrated the two monitor adapter plug he has made for the club's ST2 so we can hook up the large Sony monitor as well as the Atari color monitor for club demos.

After a short break and some general questions and answers the raffle was held for the two donated programs and meeting was adjourned at 9:45 PM.

Respectfully Submitted - Jim Moran - Secretary.

END

1988 - 1989 SLCC ELECTIONS

The San Leandro Computer Club will hold its annual elections during the regular club meeting on the seventh of June. Nominations for these elections will be held during the regular meeting on the third of May. Those officers elected will take office on the first of July, 1988. All members in good standing are eligible for nomination and all members in good standing are eligible to vote. If you have any questions on the elections please contact:
Jim Moran - Secretary

APRIL 1988

SLCC Calendar of Events

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
					1	2
3	4	5 MAIN MEETING 8PM San Leandro Public Library	6	7 WCCF	8	9
10 WCCF	11 ST SIG 8PM San Leandro Public Library	12	13 EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING	14	15	16
17	18	19 BEGINNER'S 7:30 MUSIC 7:30 TELECOM 8:00	20 EDUCATION SIG 7 PM ST SOFTWARE SIG 8 PM	21	22	23 JOURNAL DEADLINE
24	25	26 PASCAL SIG 7 PM BUSINESS SIG 8 PM	27 ST BEGINNER'S SIG 7:30 PM	28	29	30 ATARI EXPO
1 ATARI EXPO	There will be an Atari - Amiga World Class Expo during the weekend of April 30th - May 1st. It will be held at Fashion Island, which is located at the west end of the San Mateo Bridge. Many major developers will attend, as will Atari itself - so don't miss it!					

Now That It's Plugged In...

The SLCC has a Beginners SIG for those who own Atari 8-bit or ST computers and consider themselves a novice or beginner. We discuss Basic, DOS, operations, system set-up, keyboard functions, and other introductory material. SIG meetings are held on the third Tuesday of each month at 7:30 PM (8-bit) or the fourth Wednesday at 7:30 (ST). Call the appropriate SIG Leader for information and directions. See you there....

SIG (special interest group) leaders and their phone numbers are located on the Table of contents page at the front of the Journal. Please call them for more details or directions.

APRIL MEETINGS

The April Main Meeting will allow the members of the Club to meet one of the major (high powered) software developers in the field, Word Perfect Corporation. As the producers of Word Perfect, one of the best known and powerful word processors in the personal computer market, this group will draw high level users toward the ST machines. Their success can act as a catalyst for a number of business oriented publishers to follow in their footsteps. So, come to the meeting and let them know we're for real! (an' wear shoes... and a tie. We want to look good, don't we?)

The ST meeting will have Supra Corporation as a guest speaker. Not the same old stuff, mind you, but a new 10 meg floppy disk and a video digitizer. That's not an editorial goof, either, a ten million byte floppy. Sounds like just the thing for backing up a hard disk, doesn't it? Heck, who needs a HD with a 10 mb drive?

And don't miss the SLCC in booth 244 at the
West Coast Computer Faire - April 7-10.

Or the Atari - Amiga Expo - April 30 & May 1.

SLCC

JOURNAL



P.O. BOX 1506, SAN LEANDRO, CA 94577-0374

Next Meeting:

TO

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